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DESTRO
image
#04

ENERGON UNIVERSE

CONFIDENTIAL

M ALIAS DESTRO

ADDITIONAL FIELD OPERATIVES

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DESTRO IS DEAD.
YOUR COUSIN HAS NOT BEEN SEEN FOR EIGHT DAYS, DARKLON.
HIS LAST TRACKABLE MOVEMENTS WERE IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS. RIGHT BEFORE AN EXPLOSION. IN THE HEART OF A SNOWSTORM.
PERHAPS THE ELEMENTS SIMPLY GOT HIM.
PERHAPS ONE OF HIS EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONS TESTS DIDN'T GO AS PLANNED.
TOMAX AND I WERE PLANNING TO KILL HIM OURSELVES, OF COURSE. BUT IT SEEMS HE SAVED US THE TROUBLE.
EITHER WAY, YOU ARE NOW ACTING CEO OF M.A.R.S. INDUSTRIES...AS WELL AS THE PRESIDENT ELECT OF DARKLONIA.
IT MUST BE VERY NICE INDEED TO BE DARKLON THESE DAYS.

OF COURSE, IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD FOR A WORLD LEADER TO ALSO BE RUNNING THE BIGGEST PRIVATE WEAPONS MANUFACTURER IN THE WORLD.
THIS IS WHY WE SUGGEST YOU CEDE THE COMPANY TO US.
A MERGER BETWEEN M.A.R.S. AND EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES ONLY MAKES SENSE AT THIS POINT.
LISTEN. JAMES MCCULLEN DESTRO IS--WAS--MY COUSIN. M.A.R.S. INDUSTRIES HAS BEEN OWNED BY OUR CLAN FOR CENTURIES.
YES. BUT LOOK AT THIS REALLY BIG CHECK.
IT MIGHT TAKE A SECOND TO FINISH READING.
XAMOT'S HAND ENDED UP CRAMPING FROM WRITING ALL THOSE ZEROS.
WHY DO THIS? WHY IS IT WORTH THIS TO YOU?
YOU KNOW WHAT WE WANT TO SEE.
MERCER. PREPARE A DEMONSTRATION OF THE B.A.T.S.

BANGBANG BANGBANG
BANGBANG BANGBANG
IMPRESSIVE...
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH
AND THEY'RE FULLY FUNCTIONAL AUTONOMOUS SOLDIERS?
WHY HAS DESTRO NOT UNVEILED THESE TO THE MARKET YET? SURELY THIS IS ONE OF HIS GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS?
WAIT...
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

ANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANG
THEY CAN'T DISTINGUISH FRIEND FROM FOE.
THEY CANNOT BE DEPLOYED ALONGSIDE TROOPS.
THEY ARE UTTERLY UNMARKETABLE!

For a week I have been reading.
I have been reading a secret history of blood and fire and death.
The sins of the U.S. military. Of the U.S. intelligence services. All those campaigns of violent persuasion the world has never heard of.
You can pick out the shapes of the destruction between the heavy black redactions--like shadows on Pompeii walls.
Oh, your America. You have always been so scared, since your young nation's birth. It has made you so very naughty.

I read with interest the file signed with your own name, concerning the soldier Conrad "Duke" Hauser and his encounter with a seemingly intelligent fighter jet.
I had my own encounter with this soldier, not too long ago. He seemed to think I was responsible for its development. Alas, I was not.
I also read with interest how you have been scrambling to discover who on planet Earth might be working on similar technology.
How the CIA has been infiltrating American companies on American soil to steal industrial secrets.
What a wonderful scandal that would be if it came out.
A name on the list of corporations you suspected stood out to me. Things are falling into place.
MERCER. HAVE YOU MISSED ME?

You have my thanks for your assistance. For granting me access to such secret files, and safe passage with immunity to the United States.
I look forward to many more years of mutually profitable partnership between M.A.R.S. Industries and the United States Military.
God bless America. God bless the stability of the dollar. And God bless you, General Flagg.
Your dearest friend,
Laird Destro

WE ATTEMPTED TO TRACE HIS MOVEMENTS AFTER HE LEFT THE BASE, BUT WE LOST HIM WITHIN THE HOUR.
GOD FORGIVE US OUR MONSTROUS BEDFELLOWS.
I HOPE WE'VE DONE THE RIGHT THING ASSISTING HIM.
FERREZ

BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW, RIGHT, GENERAL FLAGG?
SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO BE CERTAIN, PRIVATE...

"...SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE THE DEVIL IS JUST THE DEVIL."

SHOTS! SHOTS FOR EVERYONE!
WHAT'S THE POINT IN BEING RICH BUT SOBER?
DRINK. YOUR C.E.O. COMMANDS YOU.
IT'S MY PARTY, AND I'LL GET US ALL BLACKED OUT IF I WANT TO.
HONESTLY, YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME START TO THINK THAT RICH WHITE BOARD MEMBERS OF BILLION-DOLLAR-VALUED TECH COMPANIES CAN'T PARTY.
DID YOU ALL EVEN GET MY MEMO ABOUT THE DRESS CODE?
I DID, ASTORIA CARLTON RITZ.

HOW DO I LOOK?
DESTRO.

I-IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU. I HEARD YOU WERE DEAD.
I WAS. BUT HELL COULDN'T AFFORD MY CONSULTATION FEE, SO I CAME BACK.
I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD TALK TO YOU FOR A MOMENT IN PRIVATE?
I HAVE A MEETING ROOM UPSTAIRS.
JUST LET ME POWDER MY NOSE, AND I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.
OF COURSE.
NO RUSH.

SCRAP-IRON?
SHE'S HEADED YOUR WAY.
I LOVE MY JOB.
UGH.

CRACKLE
DAMMIT.
CLUNK

THE "PARTY GIRL" ACT IS A GOOD ONE.
YOUR FATHER MADE YOU C.E.O. OF HYBRID TECHNOLOGIES BEFORE HE DIED.
HE WAS A RUTHLESS, PRACTICAL MAN. WE GOT ON WELL.
HE WOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT HIS COMPANY IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN CAPABLE HANDS.
AND HE WAS A DREAMER. HE HAD SUCH AMBITIOUS IDEAS THAT NEVER QUITE SEEMED TO COME TO FRUITION.
UNLESS, OF COURSE, HE SIMPLY LIED ABOUT THAT.
HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT. A BLONDE WIG AND A PAIR OF GOGGLES IS ALL IT TOOK TO BECOME UNRECOGNIZABLE.
CHAMELEON WAS AN APT CODENAME TO TAKE.
YEAH, WELL.

I WOULDN'T.
THAT FASCINATING E.M.P. INSIDE YOU WON'T STOP A GOOD OLD FASHIONED BULLET.

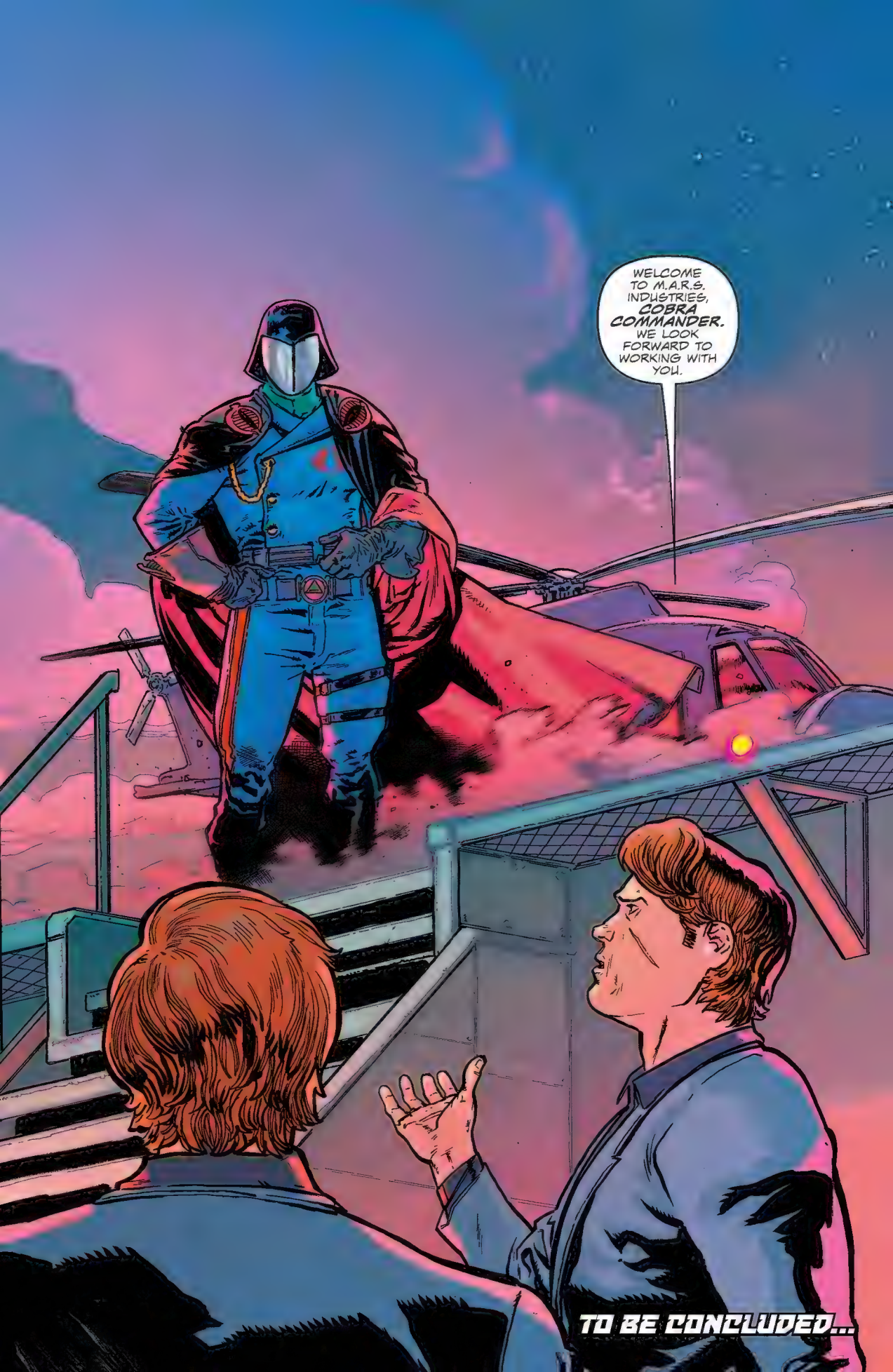
IT'S A GIFT FROM YOUR FATHER, I PRESUME?
EXPERIMENTING ON HIS LITTLE GIRL. THAT SURE SOUNDS LIKE DESMOND.
IT'S CALLED A F.L.U.K.E. PULSE. HE MADE IT TO KEEP ME SAFE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, DESTRO?
YOU ATTACKED THE DARKLONIA ARMS FAIR IN AN ATTEMPT TO KILL ME. YOU SET M.A.R.S. AND EXTENSIVE ENTERPRISES ON THE PATH TO WAR.
WHY? SO HYBRID COULD SWOOP IN AFTER WE'D WEAKENED EACH OTHER?
NO. I DIDN'T ATTACK THE ARMS FAIR. AND I WASN'T TRYING TO KILL YOU.
PLEASE. YOU USED THE SAME DRONES--THE SAME ROCKETS--WHEN YOU TRIED TO ASSASSINATE ME IN THE HIGHLANDS.
OH, YEAH. OK, THAT TIME I DID TRY AND KILL YOU.
I WAS WORRIED YOU'D ALREADY FIGURED IT ALL OUT.
CLEARLY, I SHOULDN'T HAVE. YOU OBVIOUSLY KNOW NOTHING OF PROJECT OVERKILL.
AND YET...I FEEL LIKE YOU WANT TO TELL ME.

IT WAS MY FATHER'S PET PROJECT.
WE WORKED ON IT TOGETHER, EVERY NOW AND THEN, AWAY FROM THE GREEDY EYES OF THE BOARD.
IT ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE A PIPE DREAM. AN IMPOSSIBILITY, BUT...
AFTER HE DIED, I WAS CONTACTED BY AN ANONYMOUS DONOR. THEY WISHED TO BECOME A SILENT PARTNER IN THE PROJECT--WHICH THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN NOTHING ABOUT.
BUT THEY HAD CAPITAL AND RESOURCES TO MAKE IT A REALITY.
IMAGINE A FULLY AUTONOMOUS, AUTOMATED GLOBAL DEFENSE SYSTEM.
AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABLE OF LEARNING--IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL THREATS AND NULLIFYING THEM BEFORE THEY MATERIALIZED ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE.
YOU WERE BUILDING THE ULTIMATE WEAPON.
I WAS BUILDING WORLD PEACE. THE END OF WAR.

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
IT WASN'T READY YET. BUT THEN IT WOKE UP.
AND BEING AUTONOMOUS... CAPABLE OF LEARNING AND IMPROVISING...
IT'S SINCE REFUSED TO GO BACK TO SLEEP.
IT WAS OVERKILL WHO IDENTIFIED THE DARKLONIA ARMS FAIR AS A THREAT.
IT WAS OVERKILL WHO ATTACKED IT, WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.
IT'S STILL WORKING WITH ME. FOR THE MOST PART.
BUT OVERKILL IS MAKING ITS OWN DECISIONS ABOUT HOW TO END WAR ON EARTH.
YOU'RE AFRAID OF IT.
I'M AFRAID OF WHAT IT MIGHT DO.
WHERE IS IT, ASTORIA?
WHERE IS YOUR WAR ENDER?
WATCHING US...

"ALWAYS WATCHING US."
FASCINATING.

"WAR IS BUSINESS. BUSINESS AT ITS MOST BASE LEVEL. TAKEOVERS, RESTRUCTURES, ACQUISITION OF ASSETS...
MARS
"DESTRO WAS ALWAYS TOO SMALL-MINDED TO UNDERSTAND. THE GRANDSTANDING OF HIS B.A.T. INITIATIVE ILLUSTRATES THAT CLEARLY.
"BRASH AND VIOLENT. WE PLAN TO MAKE A DISPLAY OF ITS USELESSNESS."
"WE FOUND YOU IN SOME OF HIS DEEPEST FILES. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE PARTNERSHIP YOU HAD FORMED.
"WE BELIEVE OUR VALUES MAY BE MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED THAN YOURS AND DESTRO'S EVER WERE."
"ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY...


WELCOME TO M.A.R.S. INDUSTRIES, COBRA COMMANDER. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.
TO BE CONCLUDED...

DIRECT ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO

[redacted]

GIJOE@SKYBOUND.COM

Awwwww dang…what a final page! Cobra Commander and the Twins whaaaat?! Welcome back to another DESTRO letter column with your trusty guide, editor Ben Abernathy. And joining me once again is the sinister scribe himself, Dan Watters!

[redacted]

Let's see what letters await!

Hi Team Skybound

I am 43 years old and live in the UK, and, like Dan Watters said, we didn't really have G.I. Joe. We had Action Force (which was kinda G.I. Joe), we had Action Man (which was not G.I. Joe and had nothing to do with Action Force), we had Combat Colin (which can surely can find a home in the Energon Universe), and of course we had Transformers, and our UK comics flitted between the reprints of the Marvel U.S. main continuity and the kooky and far superior Marvel UK stuff, penned by the incomparable Simon Furman.

It wasn't just the comics though, it was the toys, the movie, the Ladybird books, and of course the weekly TV show. One of my favourite episodes was called "The Girl Who Loved Powerglide", which featured the bratty yet ultimately kind-hearted heiress of a tech company who was the subject of a Decepticon kidnap plot. Apologies for the spoilers but Powerglide saves the day and the heiress falls in love with him. The name of that heiress? Astoria Carlton-Ritz. The name of the company she inherited? Hybrid Technologies.

Mr. Watters, I just want to doff my cap, tip my fedora, and set my thumbs firmly to up, sir, when I saw that you had used Astoria in your Destro book. It's the little details like this which has really added some charming romance to this Skybound run. And talking about potential romance, I wonder if we'll see Powerglide swoop in to save the day again? To see the LEDs on his internal chest panel light up in a pink love heart would be fabulous.

And talking about fabulous, this Destro book is such a rompy read is it not? Is he a hero? Is he a villain? Is he a terrorist or a revolutionary? I've never heard of him before but you are right, there is a big story behind him, he seems to me to have a bit of the ol' Count Of Monte Cristo about him.

Really looking forward to the next book.
Dale May
Swindon, UK

[redacted]

My G.I. Joe journey started in middle school when I was buying 10 cent fruit flavored candy sticks and selling them for more in school. Some kid offered to trade me G.I Joe #2 and #16 for some candy. I started buying new issues around #22 or #23 and became all about the comics and toys until some time in 1987. I dipped back in the Snake Eyes story in #94-#97 and the SAW Viper massacre around #109. Also Renegades and the movies. Bought the IDW Classics through vol 12, plus other Marvel reprints when they went on sale on digital around the Snake Eyes movie.

But starting with Cobra Commander #1, you have me being all about it again. I have loved every Skybound issue. And I have bought every new issue every week. The Joe titles (Energon and RAH) are great, Void Rivals is very interesting and I'm even enjoying Transformers. I'm absolutely buying the Compendiums when they hit my digital buying platform, and I'm hoping you go way deeper and release more TPBs/ Compendiums of Devil's Due and IDW comics, at least on digital. I missed buying Saturday Morning Adventures #4, so I'd love to have it in a collection. (And maybe a new ongoing based on the Sunbow series???)

Destro #2, which I just read, is another banger!

The character reveals are fun! After the book in Duke #1, is that bald guy in Cobra Commander #5 the second appearance of Doctor Mindbender? Is the dude next to the Hard Master in Scarlett #1 T'Jbang? Which version of Chameleon and Overkill are we getting? Are you kidding me with Astoria Carlton-Ritz? Is the guy on the cover of G.I. Joe #1 Noah Diaz? Did we see Zartan disguised as someone else in Scarlett #1? I don't expect you to answer any of these, but it's hella fun pondering them.

Thank you to all of the writers, artists, colorists, letterers and everyone at Skybound for your work on these comics! I am loving all of it. Yo Joe!

Jared Prophet
Portland, Oregon

I sure love your commitment and enthusiasm, Jared! And wow, that's a lot of questions that I think I'll have to answer with…wait and see. There IS a lot going on in the E.U. for folks with sharp eyes like yourself…

The team is doing it again!

Two issues in and Destro is delivering another fresh and interesting series! Lots of questions, who knows what, who is pulling the strings? Is Cobra Commander orchestrating the war between Destro & the Twins to weaken them both? Is it someone else entirely? What plan is Destro cooking up? Have we already seen Chameleon in issue 1? Maybe, maybe not! Can't wait until all is revealed! This is pure comic book fun and another reason I am once again a weekly comic buyer. What started with TF, Duke, Cobra Commander continues now with Destro & Scarlett! I'm loving the ride we are on & I'm here for it all!

Huge thanks to the entire team & my LCS (indirectly) thanks you too!

-Carl Sodergren

P.S.- Completely random…but…Cesspool, please put him on the creative roadmap somewhere! ;-)

So many enthusiastic letters, I love it! Stick with the series, Carl, and you will get a lot of answers…and maybe even a few more questions! And Cesspool you say? Hmm…noted…

Greetings to Dan, Andrei, Adriano and Ben.

Wow! I just finished reading Destro issue #2 and had to write you guys. First off, thanks to all involved in bringing the Energon Universe to us every month with so many great titles. This past year has been a blast reading every issue since Void Rivals hit the shelves, and I love feeling like my 8 year old self from 1985 again!

Right now I am loving this blood feud Destro is having with the Crimson Twins. It's great to see how both sides show off their resources in these beginning stages before they both call a permanent truce when they eventually join forces with Cobra Commander. (Or will they?)

I love seeing the in depth backgrounds of both M.A.R.S. and the Crimson Guard and hope to see more in this miniseries. And as much as I loved the Cobra Commander series, Destro is now quickly climbing up into my favorite spot so far and I look forward to next issue!

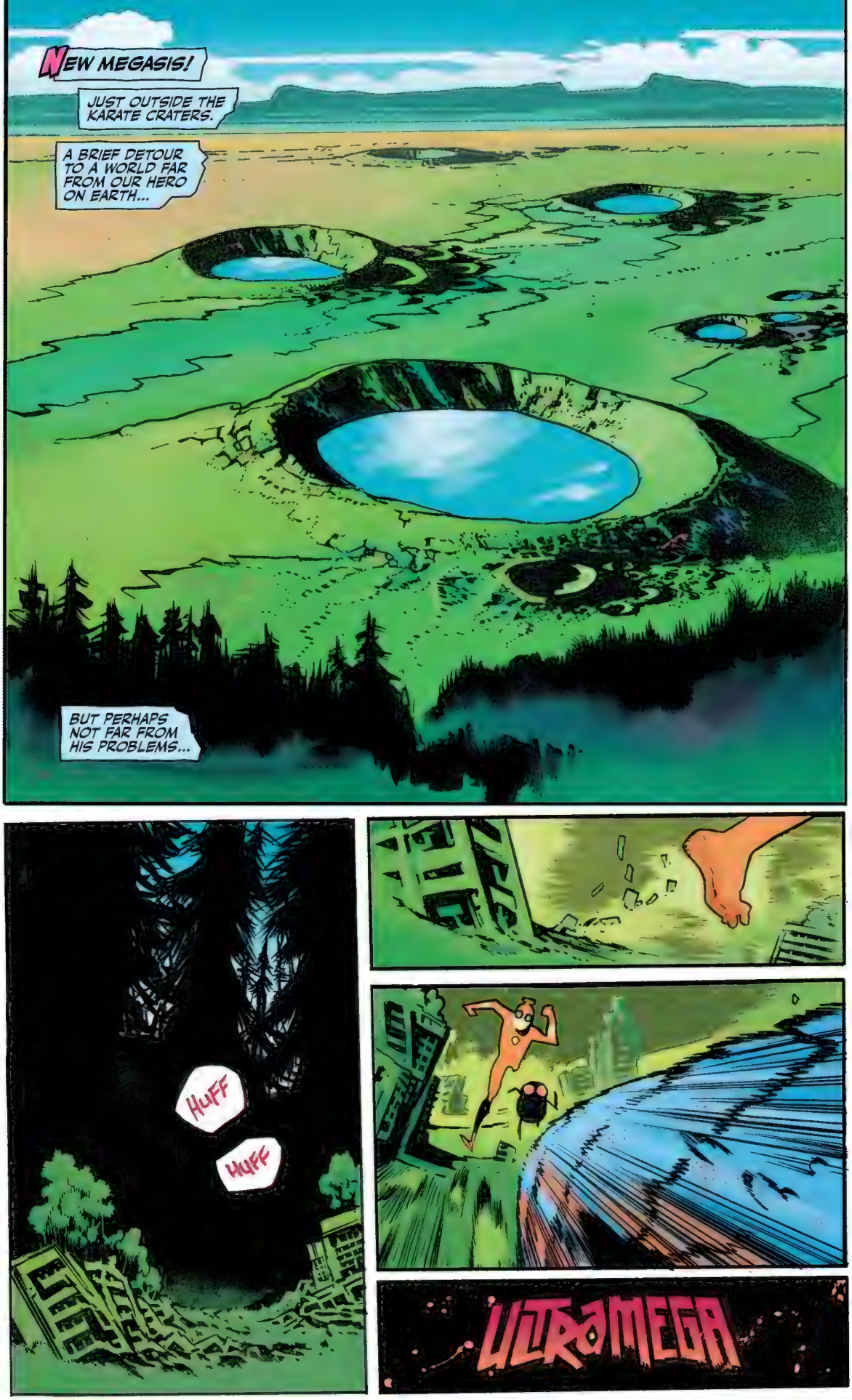
To everyone at Skybound, and especially to Dan Watters, Andrei Bressan, Adriano Lucas, and Ben Abernathy, keep up the amazing great work!

COBRA!!!!
Bob Glass

Thank you for reading and supporting our series and universe, Bob! I love that SO many readers are sharing their joy in reconnecting with what we're doing to their childhoods and I won't lie, I'm very much in the same boat. Working on DESTRO has had me digging around in my basement with my kids to show off all my original toys! (Which were too fragile to play with, disappointing my kids…the rubber bands holding them together haven't aged well haha). And I'm excited to hear what you think after the series concludes!

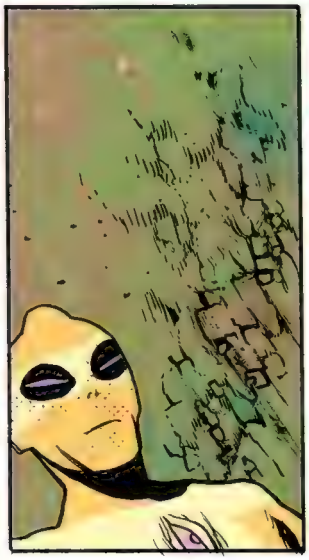
And that's a wrap for this month… one issue left, gang! And it's gonna be a killer finale! Keep the letters coming! Also, as an added treat for everyone--check out the epic preview to ULTRAMEGA #5 on the following pages!

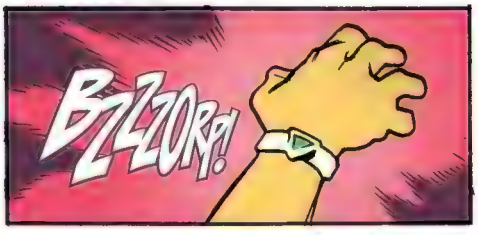
--Ben


NEW MEGASIS!
JUST OUTSIDE THE KARATE CRATERS.
A BRIEF DETOUR TO A WORLD FAR FROM OUR HERO ON EARTH...
BUT PERHAPS NOT FAR FROM HIS PROBLEMS...
HUFF
HUFF
ULTRAMEGA

ZZZZZZZZ
CHRP CHRP

CHRP




BZZORP!

STILL NO SIGN OF OUR SUBVERTS FROM UP HERE! STAY VIGILANT DOWN THERE, SORA!

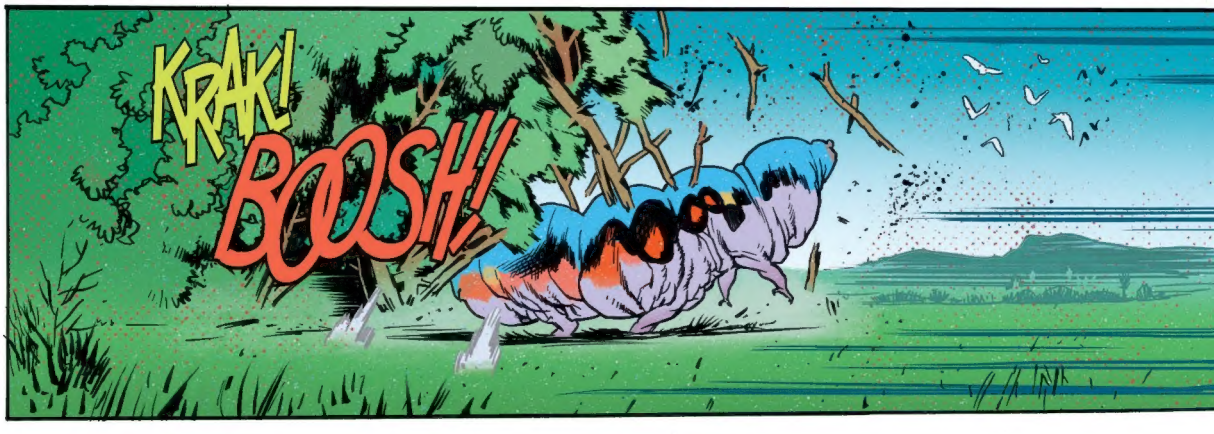
STILL NO SIGN... I'M SURE YOU ALL HEARD.
EVERYTHING IN THE *FOREST* HEARD THAT.
EVERYONE KNOWS THESE SEPARATISTS POSE NO REAL THREAT TO NEW MEGASIS. THIS IS THEATER.
TONIGHT'S CELEBRATION WOULD REQUIRE SECURITY EVEN IF KNOWN FANATICS WEREN'T ON THE LOOSE, BORO.
WE GET TO PERFORM OUR SACRED DUTIES AS KEEPERS OF THE HEAVENLY BALANCE... AND HUMP A TREE...
...ALL IN ONE AFTERNOON.
ZZZZZ

...
=HUFF=! GRAB HIM! HIS PARTNER =GASP= CAN'T BE FAR!
CHOOM!
CRAP.
THEY'RE ON THE MOVE, BUTA! WE SAW ONE HEADING WEST!

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING FROM UP HERE...
YOU ONLY SAW ONE...?

WEST...
THAT'S TOWARD THE CITY.
WE'VE GOT MOVEMENT!

CHOOM!


KRAK!
BOOSH!

THE POWER OF ULTRAMEGA RETURNS!

Writer/artist **JAMES HARREN** *(Rumble, BPRD)* and **DAVE STEWART** *(Hellboy)* present the next chapter of the Eisner Award-nominated kaiju series that rocked comics!

ISSUE #5 AVAILABLE NOW

CATCH UP ON ULTRAMEGA!

VOL. 1: STAND WITH HUMANITY

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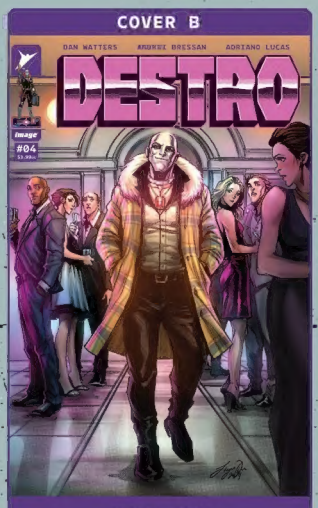
COVER B



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COVER C

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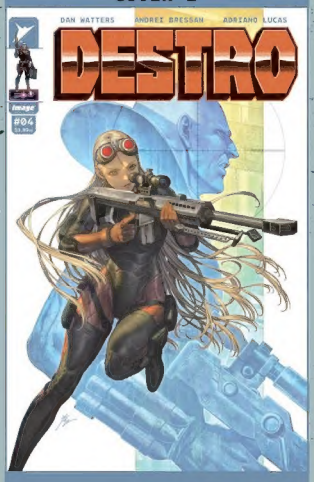
COVER D

TRAVIS MOORE & ADRIANO LUCAS

COVER E



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